

NFAC 3084-81

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

27 May 1981

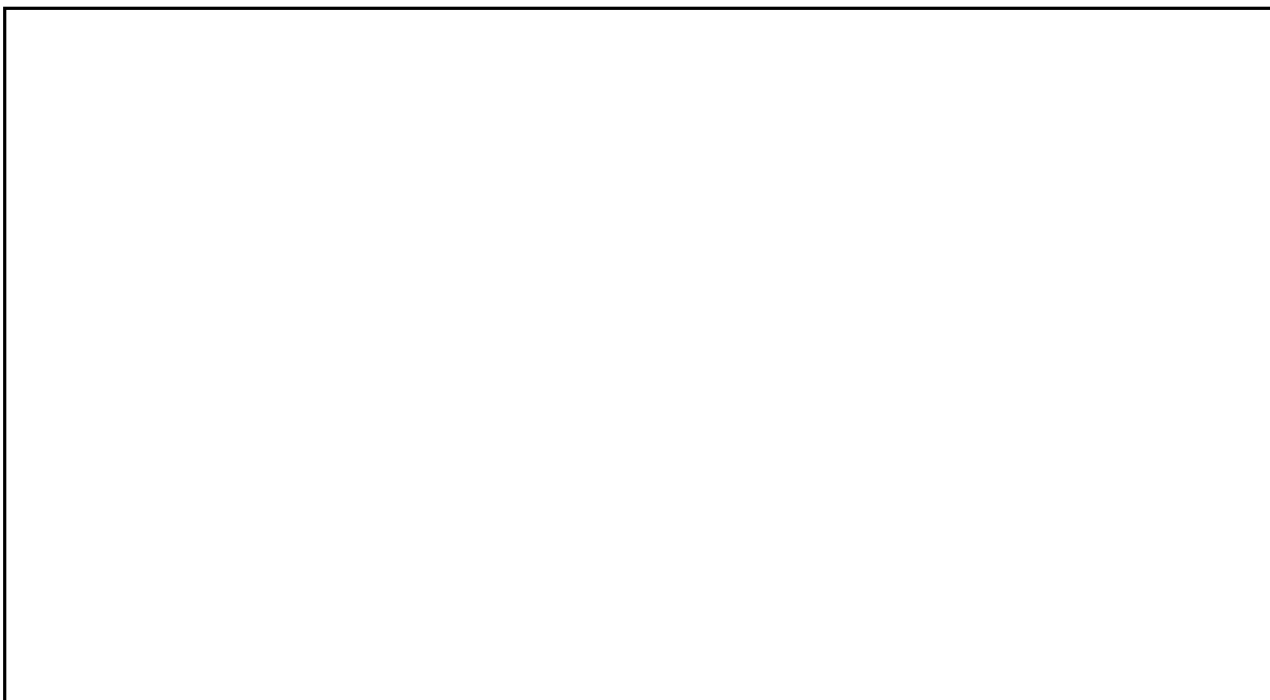
National Intelligence Officers

MEMORANDUM FOR: Distribution

FROM : [REDACTED]
Associate Chairman, National Intelligence Council

SUBJECT : East Asia Warning Assessment (U)

The following items were discussed by the Community Representatives at the 20 May Warning Meeting. (U)



China-Vietnam Border Clashes

2. The reported border clashes between China and Vietnam on 5, 12, and 16 May are not likely to escalate. Nearly all warning indicators of a major attack are normal. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] smaller scale attacks and incidents along the border which can be expected to continue. Both sides have linked border problems with the root issue of Kampuchea. China wants to force the Vietnamese to keep 20

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or so divisions deployed to the North, while taxing the Vietnamese economy. By portraying China as aggressive, Vietnam plays on traditional fears of Chinese in many ASEAN countries. Thus, both sides can find cause to provoke further border incidents. (S)

Kampuchea: Prospects for a Coalition

3. Thailand and China continue to urge Son Sann to join with the Democratic Kampuchea (DK) forces in an anti-Vietnam coalition prior to a UN conference on Kampuchea in July. While the prospects for the early formation of a coalition are somewhat improved, its long term viability is poor. Talks may soon open on the distribution of cabinet positions. While the DK is willing to concede to Son Sann's demands to have the SKNLF take the top posts, it is not certain that Son Sann is seriously interested in joining a coalition and the negotiations may be yet another effort at stalling for time. He may intend to maneuver indefinitely as the only viable "Third Force" alternative in the belief that the Vietnamese will eventually withdraw from Kampuchea and allow him to form a neutral government. If these are his true intentions, Son Sann would not benefit from association with the despised Pol Pot organization. In any event, the Thai and Chinese will persist in their efforts to gain leverage against the Vietnamese in Kampuchea. (S)

Malaysia: Leadership Transition

4. Prime Minister Hussein has decided to step down because of poor health following coronary bypass surgery. He has timed his resignation to facilitate a smooth transition in leadership. Deputy Prime Minister Mahathir is expected to succeed Hussein after winning the top post in the ruling party, in elections slated for 26 June. Political rivals are not expected to contest Mahathir, but instead focus on his vacated position of Deputy Prime Minister. In any event, there are no apparent dangers to US interests or Malaysian plans to expand their armed forces. (C)

China: Crackdown on Dissent

5. Since the Work Conference last December, the Chinese Communist Party has taken a series of measures designed to suppress dissent and to strengthen ideological orthodoxy. The party has arrested prominent dissidents in Beijing, Guangzhou and other major cities, has ordered the suppression of all "unofficial" publications and has warned party members sympathetic to the dissident movement to sever any connection with it or face expulsion from the party. The party has likewise launched a media campaign against writers and filmmakers whose works have subjected party cadre and party policies to withering scrutiny. (U)

6. Compliance with central directives aimed at suppressing dissent has been spotty so far. Some provincial first secretaries have sought to protect writers singled out for criticism while members of the Ministry of

Culture are seeking to mitigate the impact of the directives. There is some dispute, moreover, as to how far criticism of dissident writers ought to go. The leadership, especially Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang, have insisted that the crackdown on dissent be handled firmly but cautiously, and their views have thus far prevailed. (S)



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NOTE FOR DISTRIBUTION

FROM: NIO for East Asia

Attached is the assessment prepared on the basis of the Community views expressed at the 20 May warning meeting.

You or your representative are invited to attend the next warning meeting for East Asia scheduled for 1400 hours, Wednesday, 17 June in Room 7 E 62, CIA Headquarters. Please provide the name of your representative to by COB 16 June.

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